

Northfield Open Space Committee

Minutes, Mar 19, 2013

Town Hall – Planning Board Room

Items in italics require action prior to next meeting.

Present: Mike Barry, Bob Hall, Joanne McGee, Kate Rossiter, Jenny Tufts, Jerry Wagener, Chair.

Absent: Sue Handren, Sue Ross

The meeting opened at 7:30.

The committee welcomed new member Bob Hall, who is representing the Planning Board.

1. **Adoption of agenda:** No changes

2. **Approval of minutes:** The January 15, 2013, minutes were approved as presented. Jenny/Kate 4-0

3. **Member comments:**

Jenny – The FERC process is continuing. The Conservation Committee meeting last month submitted a letter of interest to the FERC by the March 1 deadline after Jenny attended the ConsCom meeting. *Jenny will continue to follow the process and attend the meetings.*

Mike – The Conservation Restriction on the Jaworski property has been finalized. Although the Conservation Commission holds the CR, Mount Grace will do the monitoring and report back to the ConsCom.

Joanne – Martha Lyon, the Master Plan consultant, would like to attend the Open Space meeting April 16th. *Joanne will email her that we would welcome her.* Joanne announced two events about Northfield forests. The first walk, reading the forested landscape with, John O’Keefe is April 21. The second event is Tree to Table Northfield Sustainable Forest Tour on April 27. It is organized by the MassLift Americorps volunteers at Mount Grace.

Bob – Bob needs a list of all historic spots in Northfield. Jerry will send Bob the list that is part of the Open Space Plan. Joanne mentioned that there is a list of Native American sites available at the Library but the locations are blacked out to save the sites from looters. Bob also asked about the locations in Northfield of the Balancing Rock and what once was considered the largest Birch Tree in the country. Joanne gave him Ed Finch’s number.

Jerry – Jerry, Jenny, Sue Handren and Melissa Gamache attended the Selectboard meeting tonight to talk about the land listed for sale by Northfield Mount Hermon. Selectman Kathy Wright said that the 22-acre Mill St. parcel by the river, perfect for a community park, does not have proper access. The Selectboard also said that “there is no money”. The Open Space Committee discussed the discouraging reaction from the Selectboard and expressed surprise that the Selectboard did not seem to remember the earlier letters and discussion about the importance of the Mill Brook Conservation Area to the town. This historic wetland, considered a premier birding spot in the country and a well-loved walking area by residents, is now lumped by NMH as part of the golf course and pool property. The committee moved that Jerry write another letter to the Selectboard

emphasizing the importance of the parcels. Jenny/Kate 6-0. Jerry and Mike are attending the Mass Land Trust conference in Worcester on Saturday, Mar 23.

4. Recommendation to the Selectboard on Mill Brook property: See above.

5. Revised Community Stewardship Awards: Jenny distributed a memo that described a revised process. Instead of having five committees judge the applicants, the Open Space Committee would be responsible for setting the criteria and judging the applicants. When the Open Space and Recreation Plan is approved, we will “tweak” the criteria to fit the plan. The committee approved the simplified process and thanked Jenny for her work. Jenny/Mike 6-0

6. Review of trails icon options: Jerry distributed samples of boundary and trail icons. After a long discussion about colors, wording, and design, the committee decided to postpone any decisions until Sue Ross returns.

7. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm. The next meeting will be Tuesday, April 16, 2013, at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne McGee, Secretary